

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00  
INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 IO-13 DHA-02 L-03 PRS-01  
/065 W

-----005967 301017Z /12

R 300946Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9482  
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 10908

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, WB, UK, UR, US, FR  
SUBJECT: RUDOLF HESS: LETTER FROM FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS

REFS: (A) BONN 10798; (B) STATE 104869;  
(C) BONN 6580

1. THE LETTER FROM CSU LEADER FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS  
TO THE PRESIDENT URGING THE EARLY RELEASE OF RUDOLF  
HESS ARRIVED BY POUCH FROM THE DEPARTMENT JUNE 21. THE  
LETTER, IN ENGLISH, IS THE SAME TEXT AS THAT IN REF C.  
THERE FOLLOWS IN PARAGRAPH 3 THE TEXT OF THE SUBSTAN-  
TIVE PORTION OF SUGGESTED REPLY. THE UK REPLY (SIGNED  
BY PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN) IS IN PARAGRAPH 4 AND  
THE FRENCH REPLY (SIGNED BY PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING)  
IS IN PARAGRAPH 5.

2. IN VIEW OF STRAUSS' PROMINENT POSITION, THE LEVEL  
OF THE OTHER REPLIES, AND THE FACT THAT THE LETTER HAS  
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REMAINED LOST FOR ALMOST THREE MONTHS, I RECOMMEND THAT  
THE PRESIDENT REPLY PERSONALLY.

3. DRAFT REPLY TO STRAUSS:

BEGIN TEXT

AS YOU ARE AWARE, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED THE VIEW, AS HAVE THE BRITISH AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS, THAT RUDOLF HESS SHOULD BE RELEASED UNCONDITIONALLY ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. THE THREE ALLIES HAVE APPROACHED THE SOVIET UNION ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS (IN 1964, 1966, 1969, 1970, 1975, 1976 AND EARLIER THIS YEAR SPECIFICALLY) REQUESTING THAT HESS BE FREED, AND ON EACH OCCASION THE SOVIETS HAVE REFUSED. SINCE MR. HESS IS IMPRISONED UNDER THE TERMS OF FOUR-POWER AGREEMENTS, HIS RELEASE REQUIRES THE CONSENT OF ALL OF THE FOUR POWERS.

WITH RESPECT TO THE QUESTION OF MR. HESS' HEALTH, PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT THIS IS A MATTER TO WHICH THE AUTHORITIES IN CHARGE OF SPANDAU HAVE GIVEN CLOSE ATTENTION. MR. HESS IS RECEIVING ADEQUATE MEDICAL ATTENTION, AND HE HAS BEEN EXAMINED BY DOCTORS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THIS YEAR. AFTER HIS MOST RECENT THOROUGH MEDICAL EXAMINATION, THE EXAMINING PHYSICIANS WERE OF THE VIEW THAT, TAKING HIS AGE INTO ACCOUNT, HIS MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CONDITION GIVES NO CAUSE FOR CONCERN.

PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO ATTEMPT TO SECURE FOUR-POWER AGREEMENT TO THE RELEASE OF MR. HESS AND WILL CONTINUE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT THE CONDITIONS OF HIS IMPRISONMENT ARE ALLEVIATED TO THE GREATEST DEGREE POSSIBLE.

END TEXT

4. UK REPLY TO STRAUSS:

BEGIN TEXT

THANK YOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF 30 MARCH.

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AMEMBASSY PARIS  
USMISSION USBERLIN  
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 10908

AS YOU ARE AWARE, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FAVOUR THE IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF RUDOLF HESS ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS SINCE 1964, WE, TOGETHER WITH THE GOVERNMENTS OF FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES, HAVE APPROACHED THE SOVIET UNION ON THE MATTER. ON EACH OCCASION THE SOVIET RESPONSE HAS BEEN NEGATIVE. FOR ANY ONE OF THE THREE WESTERN ALLIES UNILATERALLY TO RELEASE HERR HESS OR SIGNIFICANTLY MITIGATE THE TERMS OF HIS CONFINEMENT WITHOUT SOVIET CONSENT WOULD BE A DIRECT BREACH OF THE FOUR POWER AGREEMENTS GOVERNING THE IMPRISONMENT OF WAR CRIMINALS IN SPANDAU. THESE WOULD CLEARLY NOT BE CONSISTENT WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF STRICT RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS.

I CAN ASSURE YOU HOWEVER THAT THE BRITISH GOVERN-  
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MENT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR FOUR-POWER AGREEMENT TO THE RELEASE OF HERR HESS AND WILL IN THE MEANTIME DO ITS UTMOST TO ENSURE THAT HIS CONDITIONS OF IMPRISONMENT ARE AS COMFORTABLE AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT AND THAT HE CONTINUES TO RECEIVE PROPER MEDICAL CARE AT ALL TIMES.

END TEXT

5. FRENCH REPLY TO STRAUSS:

BEGIN TEXT

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

BY YOUR LETTER OF 31 MARCH 1977 YOU HAVE SOUGHT TO BRING TO MY ATTENTION THE CASE OF RUDOLF HESS WHO IS TODAY 83-YEARS OLD AND HAS BEEN IN THE MILITARY PRISON OF SPANDAU FOR THE LAST 36 YEARS.

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT, FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS, FAVORS THE IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF RUDOLF HESS. BUT, AS YOU KNOW, HIS RELEASE REQUIRES THE AGREEMENT OF THE FOUR RESPONSIBLE POWERS. HOWEVER, IN SPITE OF THE DEMARCHES WHICH THE AMERICAN, BRITISH AND FRENCH GOVERNMENTS HAVE MADE TO OBTAIN HIS RELEASE, THE SOVIET UNION CONTINUES TO OPPOSE ANY STEP OF THIS NATURE.

A UNILATERAL DECISION BY THE THREE ALLIES, WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE SOVIETS, TO RELEASE RUDOLF HESS OR TO MODIFY APPRECIABLY THE CONDITIONS OF HIS IMPRISONMENT WOULD CONSTITUTE A VIOLATION OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENTS GOVERNING THE IMPRISONMENT OF WAR CRIMINALS AT SPANDAU.

I CAN NONETHELESS ASSURE YOU THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARD OBTAINING AN AGREEMENT OF THE FOUR POWERS FOR THE RELEASE OF RUDOLF HESS, AND, IN THE MEANTIME, WILL SEE TO IT THAT THE CONDITIONS OF HIS IMPRISONMENT ARE AS SATISFACTORY AS POSSIBLE.

(COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE)

END TEXT  
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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PGOV, WB, UK, UR, US, FR, (HESS, RUDOLF), (STRAUSS, FRANZ JOSEF)  
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